

Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application, and were rejected. Arguments are presented below regarding the patentability of claims 1-20, and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. Furthermore, new claims 21-32 have been added.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-20 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,488,203 B1 to Stoutenburg et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,650,604 to Marcous et al. While applicants respectfully believe that the Examiner has failed to provide sufficient motivation for the above combination, it is unclear how Stoutenburg et al. '203 qualifies as prior art. In that regard, the inventorship is the same for Stoutenburg et al. '203 and the present application, and Stoutenburg et al. '203 did not publish prior to the filing date of the present application. Thus, applicants respectfully believe that the § 103(a) rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.¹

New Claims

New claims 21-32 have been added for consideration by the Examiner. Because these new claims depend from either claim 1 or claim 20, which claims are believed to be allowable, these new claims are also believed to be allowable. With respect to claims 21 and 31, it is noted that neither Stoutenburg et al. '203 nor Marcous et al. '604 discloses use of a first code, provided by the sender to the recipient, in addition to a confirmation code (claim 1), or an identification number and confirmation code (claim 20).


¹With respect to section 2 on page 4 of the Office Action mailed February 27, 2003, because the § 103(a) rejection is believed to be improper, any other statements made by the Examiner in the Office Action regarding inherency, implicitness, obviousness, or Official Notice are moot. If any of claims 1-20 are rejected in a subsequent Office Action, however, Applicants reserve the right to challenge such rejection as well as any statements made by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed February 27, 2003.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to each of the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe that all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If any additional issues need to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean A. Seifert et al.

By 
Mark E. Stuenkel
Reg. No. 44,364
Attorney/Agent for Applicant

Date: June 23, 2003

BROOKS & KUSHMAN P.C.
1000 Town Center, 22nd Floor
Southfield, MI 48075
Phone: 248-358-4400
Fax: 248-358-3351